

WABASH RIVER HERITAGE CORRIDOR COMMISSION

**Meeting Minutes-May 12, 2004
Miami County, The Depot at Peru**

Members present:

Allen County-Ron James
Cass County-Mercedes Brugh
DNR-Steve Morris
Huntington County-Mike Mettler
Miami County-Ken Einselen
Parke County-John Isaacs
Posey County-Tom Straw
Sullivan County-John Gettinger
Vigo County-Keth Ruble (alternate)
Wabash County-Ernest Passwater
Warren County-Louise Jewell

Proxies:

Adams County-John Gettinger
Knox County-John Gettinger/Steve Morris

Others present:

Don Jewell

Voting members not represented:

Carroll County
Fountain County
Gibson County
Tippecanoe County
Vermillion County

Non-voting Members not present:

INDOT
DNR-DHPA
IDEM
Dept. of Commerce-Tourism

Commission and DNR staff present:

Susan Benner-WRHCC Exec. Director
Cynthia Webb-DNR Outdoor Recreation
Jay Keith-DNR Outdoor Recreation

CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

John Gettinger called the meeting to order at 1:03 pm. All attendees introduced themselves. At this time Ken Einselen informed the commission of the death of Miami County alternate, Robert Althouse.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MAY 12, 2004 AGENDA

Ron James made a motion to approve the agenda and Ernie Passwater seconded the motion. John Gettinger wanted to amend the motion and add a legislative report under the committee reports. Ron James and Ernie Passwater accepted the amendment. Motion stood as amended.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MARCH 10, 2004 MEETING MINUTES

John Isaacs made a motion to approve the minutes, and Ken Einselen seconded the motion. Minutes were approved as written.

SPEAKER

Jay Keith, DNR Division of Outdoor Recreation, gave an update on seventeen projects being developed through the Wabash River Heritage Corridor Fund.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

See attached

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

See attached

Susan Benner announced she will be leaving the WRHCC sometime in September or October to move to Texas.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance

Steve Morris passed out the finance report to everyone (see attached). Steve has been "fine tuning" the report to make it self-explanatory. The report shows all of the expenses, the budget for 2003-2004 year, expenditures for March 10-May 12, then the total expenditures for 2003-2004 and last column is the available balance as of May 12. The available balance for the total operating expenses by May 12 is \$1,133.08. Steve is going to have the president sign an expense claim for \$10.30, which is for postage that Susan Benner has paid. Ron James made a motion to accept the finance report. Mercedes Brugh seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Steve Morris expects to ship thirty boxes of brochures before the Memorial weekend. Susan Benner would like to get a filing cabinet for the office. Steve said a budget is needed for the fiscal year beginning July 1st.

Water Trail

The Water Trail Committee met on April 6th and 27th reports from those meeting were made available to the commission members. Students at Purdue University developed an implementation guide for the water trail from Williamsport to Delphi. On April 6th the students gave a power point presentation of the different sites for potential access to the river and plans on how to develop those sites. The students provided the commission with a logo for the water trail. The concern of the Water Trail Committee is that there isn't enough space on the logo to incorporate WRHCC's name.

Ron James asked why we could not just use the same logo on WRHC Fund projects signs for the water trail. Susan Benner pointed out that the WRHC Fund signs only show the state of Indiana and water trail project is being developed as a cooperative effort between Indiana and Illinois.

The Water Trail Committee would in the future like to put signs on the sides of bridges indicating where road water trail users are crossing under. The committee would like a motion indicating the WRHCC's support to continue the development of a Wabash Water Trail 1) website, 2) brochures, 3) signs, and 4) future water trail guidebook. There was discussion at this point and the water trail will be discussed further in New Business.

Wabash Video

Tom Straw needed to know if the commission was going to go forward with the video.

After some discussion, Tom made a motion that the commission should pass a resolution to proceed with the video. Keith Ruble seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Mercedes questioned the commission about where the funding for the video would come from. It was explained that WFYI was going to help find funding for the video.

Education

Teach the Wabash

Susan Benner announced Teach the Wabash is taking place June 1st at the Depot in Peru. Cass, Miami and Wabash Counties Soil and Water Conservation Districts are helping plan the event. Susan is trying to get local service organizations to sponsor the lunch so participants will be provided a free lunch.

Another Teach the Wabash will take place in Vincennes at Ouabache Trails Park with the assistance of Knox County Park Superintendent Tracy Newberry. The date of the event will be determined later.

4-H

John Gettinger attended the 4-H Committee meeting in Terre Haute to develop the curriculum for 4-H participants to "Discover the River". Parke, Vermillion, Vigo and Sullivan counties have their 8th graders participating in the program.

Newsletter

Susan Benner reported the email newsletter had been sent and that printed copies were available at the meeting. Tom Straw drew three names for submitting articles for the next newsletter: Mike Craig (Vermillion County), Steve Krull (Adams County), Tracy Newberry (Knox County). Articles are due by July 7th.

Legislative Committee

John Gettinger reported that he had spoken with John Gregg who was the former speaker of the Indiana House of Representatives. John Gregg suggested commission members make contact with their legislators. John Gregg also suggested the commission choose one commission member to speak for the commission.

John Gettinger had an idea to develop a questionnaire of ten questions and then ask for responses from the legislators. After some discussion it was decided five questions would be better instead of ten.

Mercedes Brugh said the commission should show the legislators who we are and what the commission is about. Ron James suggested it might be better if we asked the legislators what they see in the commission and what they wanted the commission to do.

It was decided to discuss further under New Business.

OLD BUSINESS

Corridor Management Plan

Susan Benner reported that she had mailed out sixteen more copies of the CMP. Susan also reported that Rory Robinson had submitted an Executive Summary of the Wabash River Heritage Corridor Management Plan. Susan passed out copies to members of the commission.

501(c)(3) Status

Ron James reported on the status of the 501(c)(3). Ron was trying to get a legal ruling from the Attorney General on the necessity or appropriateness of the commission establishing a 501(c)(3) organization. Ron reported that a request for the Attorney General opinion has to come from a state

official of Indiana or a department head. Steve Morris will talk to the DNR chief legal counsel about this. Ron said he would be willing to talk to the DNR legal counsel. Steve is going to check with Natural Resources Foundation.

Susan Benner indicated that Banks of the Wabash, a 501 (c)(3) has shown some interest in including all 19 counties within their organizations scope.

Updating Agenda Format

John Gettinger would like to open the agenda for approval at the beginning of the meeting. John would also like to program speakers that will educate the commission on how to do their job better.

Executive Director's Contract

Steve Morris reported the contract went through fine and the funds have been encumbered. Because Susan announced she would be leaving in the fall, Steve will need to check on the status of funds being available after her contract is terminated.

WRHCC Retreat Report

As requested at the WRHCC Retreat Susan Benner passed out two lists one that identified state/federal agencies, organizations in the private sector and non-profits that we could partner and collaborate with. The second list, which was created with the assistance of Paul McAfee, identified companies, organizations, and individuals the WRHCC might seek funding from.

NEW BUSINESS

Letters Sent & Received

Susan Benner listed several letters she received:

Northwest Power Services sent a letter about the hydro-electric dam in Huntington.

Notice of the National Trails Symposium

RPA, Inc., is publicizing the opening for an Executive Director's position at the Rivers Institute

Flyer for a research grant guide

Workshop on Building effective non-profit boards

Newsletter from Historic Forks of the Wabash

Steve Morris reported that Gibson County had sent notice that Don Whitehead is the new appointment for Gibson County.

Other Items

Executive Director Search Committee

A committee was formed to conduct a search for a new Executive Director. The members for the committee are Tom Straw-Chairperson, Keith Ruble, Mike Mettler, Ernest Passwater and John Gettinger. The committee is working on a timeline, by June 21st have five candidates and then in July select one candidate.

Water Trail

Susan Benner said there is less than \$5,000 from Banks of the Wabash earmarked for the water trail. There is a little less than \$10,000 remaining from a WRHCF project that the water trail committee would like to earmark for the development of the water trail. Ron James made a motion to use the money from WRHCF for signs and pamphlets for the water trail. Ernest Passwater seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Legislators

It was decided that the commissioners would come up with five questions to ask the legislators. Ron James said the commission should approach them with the objective of getting information from them. Ron suggested commission members ask legislators their view on why the WRHCC was established, what goals were envisioned, and what should be future goals of the commission.

Keith Ruble suggested getting legislators together as a group as early as possible. That way all 19 of the county commissioners could work together as one. It was mentioned that the commission could take advantage of existing community events as opportunities to engage legislators.

Mercedes Brugh is the chair of the legislative committee. Mercedes commented more input or questions are needed.

Tom Straw said the commission should make a list as to what the legislators would like to have happen, how high a priority is the WRHCC to them, and who do you want us to keep updated.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Before the WRHCC meeting on July 14th Susan Benner proposed either taking a boat ride on the Wabash (captained by John Galloway) at a cost of \$8 per person, or the commission could borrow canoes owned by Chuck Weis and paddled down the Wabash. The commission members indicated they were interested in the canoe trip.

Steve Morris announced that the Indiana Park & Recreation Association is holding a trails workshop on June 17th in Delphi.

Susan announced Dan McCain received the Sagamore of the Wabash Award.

Louise Jewell commented the Mississippi Workshop is being held in July again. They always welcome volunteers.

Susan said May 22nd and 23rd the Central Indiana Wilderness Club will be teaching canoeing camping .

ADJOURNMENT

John Isaacs made a motion to adjourn and Mike Mettler seconded the motion. Adjourned.

NEXT MEETING-July 14, 2004 at Ross Hills Park, Tippecanoe County

Wabash River Heritage Corridor Commission
President's Report
Submitted by John Gettinger
5-12-04

- March 30th Attended the 4-H Committee meeting in Terre Haute to develop the curriculum for 4-H participants to "Discover the River"
- April 6th Attended the Water Trail Committee Meeting in West Lafayette at the Purdue University Campus
- April 17th Staffed the Wabash River Heritage Corridor Commission booth for Earth Day at Sullivan Lake
- April 21st Attended the Banks of the Wabash Annual Meeting and become a member
- April 28th Met with Representative Alan Chowning to discuss Wabash Projects and the WRHCC's legislative initiative
- May 3rd Meeting with John Gregg to discuss the WRHCC's legislative initiative

Future Meetings

- May 19th Meeting with Dave Longo, IL DNR to develop a partnership with Illinois on the Wabash Water Trail Project
- May 24th Meeting with Michael Leyman, Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) Louisville District in Vincennes to discuss the types of funding the ACOE provides to riverfront communities



Wabash River Heritage Corridor Commission
Executive Director's Report
April 26, 2004

Little Turtle Waterway Annual Meeting – Invited by Mercedes Brugh, I gave a presentation about the elements that make a water trail and the benefits associated with it. I then provided an update on the status of the development of the Wabash Water Trail.

De-Trash the Wabash – Continuing to work on assisting the coordination of the Wabash clean-up event August 28th in Tippecanoe County. Three clean-up sites have been secured, Fort Ouiatenon, Shamrock Park and Tapawingo Park. We have already received donation of services from Waste Management (donation of 2 dumpsters valued at over \$900) and two tire stores have agreed to accept a total of 120 tires. Letters for financial support from local businesses will be sent out shortly. The mayor of West Lafayette and the Tippecanoe County Commissioners have written letters of support for the clean up effort.

Scenic Byway – Continuing to provide any type of assisting I can for the scenic byway application. I have suggested they include another section of the Corridor Management Plan in the grant application, a table that indicates what types of activities visitors look for when planning a trip, number 1 on the list was enjoying scenic beauty.

IDNR- Division of State Parks and Reservoirs Interpretive Naturalists – Provided a presentation about the development of the Wabash Water Trail.

Little River Wetland Project - Meet with their new director and viewed their property.

Meet with Eric Stallsmith of The Technological Edge, Inc. – Along with Dale Brier (DNR – Outdoor Recreation) we discussed a possible partnership on the development of the Wabash Water Trail website.

Sullivan County Earth Day Celebration – Joined by John Gettinger we set up a Wabash River Heritage Corridor Commission booth at the Earth Day Celebration.

Banks of the Wabash Annual Meeting – I gave a brief presentation updating the progress of the Wabash Water Trail project.

Teach the Wabash – Scheduled to take place June 1st at the Depot, Peru. Cass, Miami and Wabash Counties Soil and Water Conservation Districts are helping plan the event. I am approaching local service organizations to sponsor the lunch so participants will be provided a free lunch.

Kiwanis – I have been approached to provide a presentation on May 4th in Kokomo on the WRHCC and the water trail project.

Meeting with Illinois Department of Natural Resources - Scheduling a meeting with IL DNR to discuss a possible partnership on the Wabash Water Trail.

Meeting with Army Corps Of Engineers – May 24 in Vincennes to discuss the types of projects the Corps provides funding for that maybe of interest to riverside communities.

Share Hoosier Riverwatch kit – In a partnership with Little Turtle Reservoir the WRHCC will be sharing a new updated water quality testing kit to fulfill our obligations to Hoosier Riverwatch.